

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWING

A replacement drawing of Figure 1 is submitted concurrently herewith under a separate cover letter.

REMARKS

Further and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Replacement Drawing

A replacement drawing for Figure 1 is submitted herewith to correct two typographical errors in the drawing. Support for this change is provided in Applicants' specification. Specifically, page 7, lines 1-9 states, "Each gas phase section 6, which collects a gas when the reaction starts to generate it, is provided with a discharge port in communication with the pipe 7 for collecting the gas generated. Each of the pipes 7 connected to the gas phase sections 6 for collecting the generated gas extends into the water filled in the water-sealed tank 3 and opens in its discharge end. The open ends of the pipes are positioned at suitable depths of different water pressures. The gas meter 8 is connected to the water-sealed tank 3 for measuring the flow rate of the gas discharged through the generated gas collecting pipes 7." Accordingly, no new matter has been added to the application by the replacement drawing submitted herewith.

Claim Amendments

The claims have been amended to accept the subject matter which was indicated as allowable by the Examiner. The subject matter which has been cancelled as a result of this amendment is done so without prejudice.

Specifically, claims 6-12 have been cancelled, without prejudice. New claims 13-16 have been added to the application.

New claim 13 corresponds to prior claims 6 and 8. New claim 14 corresponds to prior claims 6, 7 and 8. New claim 15 corresponds to prior claims 6 and 10. New claim 16 corresponds to prior claims 6, 7 and 11.

The new claims contain minor editorial changes in order to better conform with U.S. practice.

It is noted that “molecular sulfur” has been amended to recite only “sulfur”. Although the Japanese language application contains the literal phrase “molecular sulfur”, this meaning in Japanese does not correspond to the same phrase in English. Accordingly, Applicants assert that this amendment is proper and does not constitute new matter.

Additionally, the phrase “oxidation and reduction potential” has been corrected to recite “oxidation-reduction potential” in order to clarify the term.

No new matter has been added to the application by the above-discussed amendments.

Patentability Arguments

The patentability of the present invention over the disclosure of the reference relied upon by the Examiner in rejecting the claims will be apparent upon consideration of the following remarks.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Thus, the rejection of claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Mizutani et al. (JP 2002-292377) has been rendered moot by the cancellation of these claims.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The rejection of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mizutani et al. (JP 2002-292377) has been rendered moot by the cancellation of this claim.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has indicated that previous claims 8-11 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants have rewritten claims 8-11 to incorporate the subject matter of the rejected claims from which they depend. Accordingly, per the Examiner's statement in item 4 on page 4 of the Office Action, new claims 13-16 are allowable.

Conclusion

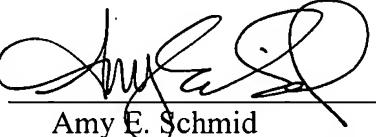
Therefore, in view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is submitted that each of the grounds of rejection set forth by the Examiner has been overcome, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such allowance is solicited.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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